## The Search for Public Health Funding: De-Mystifying the Process (*Revised*)

### *(Part 2 of a Series)*

This is the second part of a multi-part series on funding research. Over the next few months, the Texas Department of Health Funding Information Center will explore the "phenomenon" of funding research. The series is intended to de-mystify the funding research process and guide you on your quest for funding. We will share with you our experiences and insights. This month's issue focuses on state funding research.

Several reference publications will be mentioned during the course of this series, all of which can be found at the TDH Funding Information Center. The Funding Information Center is located within the agency's Library, Tower Building, Room T-404 (4th floor), 1100 W. 49th Street, Austin. Our hours are Monday-Friday, 7:30-6:00.

## Part 2: State Funding Research

Texas state agencies are an excellent source of funding for community-based organizations primarily because competition is limited to Texas as opposed to the entire United States. It may also be easier to become acquainted with state agency program staff and receive technical assistance in developing your proposal than at the federal level. There are some drawbacks, however.

◆ The size of state awards may be smaller than the direct federal award counterparts.

◆ The timing of the announcement may leave little time for preparation, especially if it involves federal deadlines for state agencies.

◆ Because of strict funding requirements, state awards may be unable to support certain services depending on the scope of the grant.

◆ State funding may be more unpredictable because it is subject to both state and federal appropriations and priorities. The Texas Department of Health, for example, for FY2003 has secured about 55.29% of its total funding through federal sources and 43.06% from the state general revenue (1.65% from other sources). The Bureau of HIV/STD Prevention's federal-state funding ratio is closer to 76:24.

### State Grants Team

The State Grants Team is a division of the Governor's Office of Budget, Planning and Policy and can be reached at (512) 463-1778. The State Grants Team's mission is to alert entities throughout Texas about funding opportunities. The Grants Team does not disburse grant funds, but they do provide: technical assistance and information about available federal, state and private grants, proposal writing support and review of applications and proposal writing training.

The Grants Team provides services to State legislators, state agencies, all subdivisions of government, non-profit agencies and individuals. The State Grants Team has compiled a number of resources about public and private funding opportunities. They list federal, state and other resources on their website at: http://www.governor.state.tx.us/stategrants/stategrants_resources.htm.

Their Grant Alert is a compilation of information about current funding solicitations offered by federal, state and private grant funding resources. The Grant Alert is posted in Rich Text Format (readable by most word processors) twice weekly. Prior alerts remain listed for about two weeks before being removed. Alerts are available on the Internet at: http://www.governor.state.tx.us/stategrants/stategrants_alert.htm.

### State Funding Websites

The best source for information on state grants is, of course, the state agency that is issuing the grant. Many state agencies have websites that list their available funding opportunities. Some examples are listed below.

Texas Commission on Alchohol and Drug Abuse
**http://www.tcada.state.tx.us/providernews/**

Texas Department of Transportation
**http://www.txdot.state.tx.us/trafficsafety/grants/grants.htm**

Texas Department of Health
**http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/funds.htm**

Texas Department of Health Funding Information Center
**http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/fic/default.htm**

Office of Rural and Community Affairs
**http://crhi.state.tx.us/**

Texas Health and Human Services Commission
**http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/about_hhsc/hhsc_grants.html**

Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs
**http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/**

Texas Commission on Fire Protection
**http://www.tcfp.state.tx.us/**

**STATE GRANTS**

### TRAIL- Texas Records and Information Locator

TRAIL searches and locates information from over 150 Texas state agency web servers. You can use their search engine found at http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/trail/index.html to find state government publications available on the Internet and basic information about state agencies including contact, legal, budgetary and background resources.

State agencies have been encouraged to create web pages with lists of their funding opportunities. These pages can be searched by using a secondary search engine on the TRAIL website which can be found by clicking on the STATE GRANTS logo which will link you to the following website: http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/trail/grantsearch.html. This search feature is still under development as more records are being added, but when it is complete you will be able to search for state agency funding opportunites by eligibility, issue area and by using text words.

### Texas Register

The *Texas Register* is the state's equivalent to the *Federal Register*. State agencies announce the following types of funding opportunities in the *Texas Register*: requests for proposals; consultant proposal requests and awards exceeding $10,000; and invitation for bids for state contracts. The *Texas Register* also includes notices of open meetings or public hearings, proposed rules, and adopted rules following a 30-day public comment period. Published twice a week by the Texas Office of the Secretary of State, a one-year subscription to the *Texas Register* in print form costs $200.00 (To order by phone, call (512) 463-5561 or (800) 226-7199 or e-mail subadmin@sos.state.tx.us). The *Texas Register* is also available through the Internet free at: http://lamb.sos.state.tx.us/texreg/index.html. Check out this website for the free electronic version and the opportunity to subscribe to specialized e-mail and search services offered by the *Texas Register*.

The Texas Department of Health's Library subscribes to the *Texas Register* in print form and back issues are available in microfiche. Many public and university libraries as well as government offices subscribe to the *Texas Register*. Like the *Federal Register,* you are strongly encouraged to find out where you can access the *Texas Register* in your local area.

### Other Publications

Another publication that may be of use to potential applicants is the *Guide to Texas State Agencies*. The 11th edition (©2001) is currently available from the LBJ School of Public Affairs for $65.00. (Office of Communications, Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, The University of Texas at Austin, Box Y, University Station Austin, TX 78713-8925, Phone: (512) 471-4218, Fax: (512) 475-8867, E-Mail: pubsinfo@uts.cc.utexas.edu).

The Guide offers the most complete and up-to-date agency-related information available, including directory and statutory data as well as descriptions of agencies' programs, functions, and organizational structure. The 11th edition incorporates agency-related changes made by the 76th Legislature in 1999. There is also a list of state government websites.

The LBJ School of Public Affairs also sells an Organizational Chart of Texas State Government ($15). This unique wall chart displays the structure and interrelationships of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of Texas government. The chart organizes state agencies by subject area and indicates the composition of each governing body and the method of appointment of each agency head. Relationships between agencies within the framework of Texas government are emphasized.

### Mailing Lists and State Agency Contacts

In addition to publishing a notice of a "Request for Proposal" in the *Texas Register,* many state agency programs mail a notice or the complete application package to persons on their mailing lists. The mailing lists are often compiled from current grantees, previous applicants, or those who have requested applications in the past. The moral here is to apply for funding.

The Texas Department of Health Funding Information Center (FIC) distributes a free publication called the *Funding Alert* which all Texas residents are eligible to recieve. To place yourself on the FIC mailing list, call (512) 458-7684, 1-888-963-7111 ext. 7684 or e-mail: fundctr@tdh.state.tx.us. In its effort to monitor state funding, the Funding Information Center scans each issue of the *Texas Register* for HIV-related and public health-related funding information or rules. In addition, the Funding Information Center solicits information on upcoming funding opportunities from programs within the Texas Department of Health as well as other state agencies, such as the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse.

It is also a good idea to become acquainted with state agency staff, particularly staff at the local or regional level. By maintaining a cooperative relationship with state agency staff, you may learn of soon-to-be announced competitions or initiatives.

For example, if you are interested in HIV funding, the Texas Department of Health's HIV/STD Health Resources Division has Regional HIV Coordinators for each of the state's eleven public health regions.

The Regional HIV Coordinators include: **Public Health Region 1 -** Vacant, (806) 767-0494 (Lubbock); **Public Health Region 2/3** - Ronald Stinson, (817) 264-4775 (Arlington); **Public Health Region 4/5North -** Charles O'Brien, (903) 533-5322 (Tyler); **Public Health Region 6/5South** - Tamaria Walker, (713) 767-3441 (Houston); **Public Health Region 7 -** Vacant, (254) 778-6744 (Temple); **Public Health Region 8** - Don Sharitz, (210) 949-2153 (San Antonio); **Public Health Region 9/10 -** Sarana Savage, (915) 683-9492 (Midland); **Public Health Region 11** - Paul Topete, (956) 423-0130 (Harlingen).

*NEXT MONTH:  Foundation Funding Research*

## Funding Research -
## Finding a Potential Government Funder and Applying

The Funding Information Center (FIC) has compiled some tips and steps on program planning and preparing a grant proposal for state or federal grant programs. The first thing needed to prepare a grant proposal is a viable program idea. Once an idea is formulated and thought out then you can proceed with researching funding sources and writing the proposal. Two things that should always be remembered when applying for grants is *BE PATIENT* and *BE PERSISTANT*. It can take months or years to move from a program idea to a funded program that is up and running.

Below are some of the more important aspects of program planning and proposal writing. For a more complete picture of the grants process, we recommend you attend a grant writing course and read as much information as possible. The FIC announces several grantsmanship and grant writing courses throughout the year and has a good collection of books available on these subjects as well.

### DOs

☺ Check to make sure your program and/or services are not already being provided. Complete a needs assessment to see if your program is needed and what resources are currently available. Check with federal, local or state agencies, legislators, and related public/private organizations to see if similar programs are in existence or have been considered in your area.

☺ Determine what other services or programs your program may have an effect on and collaborate with the organizations and agencies providing those services. Other potential sources of funding may be found in those areas.

☺ Meet with the top decision makers in your community who would be concerned with the proposed program.

☺ Be realistic about what services you can provide to the targeted population. Ask yourself , "Do I really have the time, staff, and energy to take on this program?"

☺ Start collecting the necessary documents you will need to apply for the grant, such as articles of incorporation, tax exemption certificates, and bylaws. If you do not have these, start working on them. Other necessary documents may include letters of support from individuals or groups representing academic, political, professional, and lay organizations.

☺ Attend a grantsmanship workshop that will explain the full grants process to you if you are not familiar with grants.

☺ Look for potential funders whose interests, intentions, and needs are the same as yours and your program. Make sure you meet the eligibility requirements of the potential funder.

☺ Become familiar with the agency and program requirements of the grant or grants you wish to apply for. Also learn the different types of funding mechanisms that exist (i.e. grants, cooperative agreements, contracts).

☺ Request an application kit and read it and any other information completely once received before preparing the application. The application kit may include more information that may have a bearing on your eligibilty or program requirements.

☺ Allow yourself plenty of time to write the grant application.

☺ Follow the instructions EXACTLY. Review the instructions daily as you prepare each section of the grant. Stay within the required page limits.

☺ Ask questions of the funding agency if you do not know the answer. There is no such thing as a "dumb" or "stupid" question. It is best to be safe now than sorry later on.

☺ Ask for suggestions, criticisms, and advice about the proposed project. Take advantage of the program and business contacts provided. The FIC provides contact information in every Funding Alert issued. Having an objective third party critique your application is a very good idea.

### DOs

☺ Keep detailed notes of suggestions and ideas that come up during the proposal writing process and do not throw them away. They might come in handy for the next grant application you write.

☺ Research your topic in the literature available and provide accurate citations. Your local library can help you with this. The funder will see that you have done your homework.

☺ Purchase a good writing style manual to guide you in footnoting, punctuation, grammar, formatting, etc. Grant Reviewers lose interest in documents that are not appealing to the eye or are hard to read due to bad spelling, grammar, etc.

☺ Become a grant reviewer. This will allow you to see grants applications and the mistakes or good ideas others have made. You will quickly learn what to do and what not to do.

☺ Provide an accurate and realistic budget account. This section often causes a grant not to be funded.

☺ Pay close attention to the scoring weights given to different sections of the application. Make sure you have addressed and emphasized the points called for.

☺ Write the abstract last. This is often the most important section as it will set the tone of the application by concisely summarizing the rest of the document.

☺ Read the proposal and instructions one last time before it is mailed. Have others do the same; there may still be something missing.

### DON'Ts

☹ Duplicate a program already in existence in your area unless the funding agency is requesting applications for program replication or your program will serve different populations and needs.

☹ Overlook support from local government agencies and public officials.

☹ Include anything that was not requested or anything that does not have substance such as letters of support that just say we support this effort without giving any details on how they support it.

☹ Submit an application if you do not meet the eligibility or program requirements for a potential funder.

☹ Submit "sloppy" work. Proposals and grant applications should by neat, typed, collated, and most of all "spell-checked." Applications can not be docked points for bad grammar and spelling but it definitely influences the grant reviewer.

☹ Request more money than is available for each grant or inflate or underestimate the amount needed.

☹ Forget necessary signatures.

☹ Provide conflicting data or information.

☹ Plagiarize. Give credit where credit is due.

☹ Think the application has to be written in the order it appears in the application. Write what is ready to be written whenever. There are no rules that say you have to write the introduction first or the conclusion last. They do have to appear in the application in those orders but they do not have to be written in those orders.

☹ Use buzz words or assume the reviewer automatically knows what you are talking about. If you do use buzz words, define them. Sometimes grant reviewers not familiar with the subject matter are used to more objective rating. State agencies will often use internal aned external grant reviewers to look at the same grants.

☹ Try to write the whole grant yourself. Delegate sections that you are not familiar with to someone who is then rewrite the section to flow with the rest of the grant. The grant should sound as if one person is speaking. It is obvious when the tone changes from section to section.

☹ Wait until the day before the deadline to mail in the application and then call to see if they received it. Murphy's Law will apply. Send it by certified mail or courier so that you will have a receipt confirmation.